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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 05982-85
6 December 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: Changes Since 1981 in Intelligence Community Support of
Policymaking

A. National Estimates

1. The quantity of Estimates (of various types) produced by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) each year has risen sharply: from some 40 in 1980, to some 100 this year.

2. The quality and utility of Estimates has likewise improved, in several ways. Policymaking consumers have indicated that they find our Estimates of the last few years improved in relevance, timeliness, and ease of digestion.

3. The DCI's Senior Review Panel (SRP) has explicitly confirmed this, reporting (May 1985) that since 1981 national intelligence production has, as compared with the period before 1981:

- Presented more adequate threat perceptions: as compared to the period before 1981 twice as many estimates have been done on military matters, five times as many on non-military subject matter.
- Given better coverage of Third World problems by a factor of four.
- Improved periodicity of coverage and analysis by a factor of more than four: principal such subjects revisited include Central America and the Caribbean, terrorism, and chemical and toxin weapons.
- Fuller treatment of previous relative estimate gaps: principal subject examples include East-West trade,

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Soviet-East Europe relations, Soviet-Asian relations, technology transfer, nuclear proliferation, southern Africa, and the world oil market outlook.

- Broken new ground by a number of pioneering estimates on new questions: examples, USSR and the Third World, debt problems of the major LDCs, African famine prospects, narcotics trafficking, anti-American terrorism, and the outlook for instability/sudden change in the Third World.
- Involved fuller participation of the Intelligence Community in the preparation of national estimates -- an expansion by a factor of four: prior to 1981, the community was involved (with full opportunity for input, concurrence, or dissent) in less than one-half of the NIC's estimates; since 1981, that participation has grown to more than three quarters.

4. Reflecting much fuller contact with the policymaking community has been a rapid growth in the production of specially requested "fast track" Estimates, usually concerning foreign crisis issues. Such Estimates account for exactly one-half of the Estimates produced in 1985, up from 15 percent of the Estimates produced in 1981. Prime examples of such subjects in recent months include Qadhafi's challenge to US and Western interests, West European terrorism and its threat to NATO and US interests, radicalism in Lebanon, and the Philippine succession and the US.

5. Similarly, many more specially requested especially sensitive Estimates have been produced, some on a fast-track basis. Recent examples: Nicaragua's support for regional subversion and insurgency; Soviet strategic and political objectives in arms control in 1985; Soviet reaction to Stealth; targeting studies on Iran, Syria, and Libya; and South Africa's changing policy agenda.

6. We have meanwhile insisted that our Estimates be written more crisply, stressing especially the need for Key Judgments that are clear, brief, and unequivocal, and yet faithfully distill the Estimates' messages and tone.

7. We have also pushed the Community to make fuller use of dissenting or alternative judgments, rather than to settle for watered-down "coordinated" language.

8. Our Estimates have consciously included more emphasis than in previous years on the implications of the given paper's message for US interests. This has provided policymaking consumers more "handles" or ideas, without in any way compromising intelligence objectivity.

9. Where appropriate we have added certain well-received new sections to our Estimates: alternative scenarios, statements on collection gaps, and intelligence bibliographies.

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10. Senior policymakers now receive advance copies of the Key Judgments of certain Estimates in a specially printed executive format.

B. Parallel Improvements in the NIC

11. Through various means and settings, the NIC's National Intelligence Officers (NIOs) have increased their contact with the policymaking community and with the Congress. This has included additional NIO access to top-level officials, including the President, members of the Cabinet, and the Joint Chiefs; and briefings of joint sessions of the House and Senate, in addition to special testimony before all of the major Congressional committees. The NIC has also become the Intelligence Community's chief point of contact with the academic and business communities, whose judgment and expertise have contributed much to our products.

12. NIC officers now produce several additional types of estimative projects for the DCI. These include not only certain sensitive, coordinated papers on given country's vulnerabilities, but various kinds of in-house "think" papers, what if? exercises, and certain papers which treat special economic or other needed subjects which do not happen to fit going art forms.

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14. The DCI has added certain specific new NIO portfolios which permit the NIC to support policymaking much more effectively in these fields: foreign deception and intelligence activities; counterterrorism; nuclear, chemical, and biological proliferation; science and technology; and narcotics.

15. In addition to individual contact with the DCI, the NIOs now meet regularly with the DCI on pre-arranged substantive agendas, the geographical and functional NIOs alternating every other week.

16. Closer NIO-DCI contact has been accomplished by a 1981 reorganization which placed the NIC directly under the DCI. Among the benefits of this change has been a greater role for NIOs as the personal representatives of the DCI in a variety of venues.

17. The NIC's Analytic Group has been strengthened in various ways. [redacted] now draft about one-third of each year's estimates, do a lot of repair work on others' ailing drafts, fill in for absent Assistant NIOs, and do special studies for the DCI.

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18. The NIC has instituted informal measures to increase collegial review and quality control of certain Estimates, particularly those whose subject matter spans regions, issues, or disciplines.

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19. The DCI has instituted measures which make NIC products more responsive to quality control suggestions from the DCI's SRP.

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